

Holiday At the Henderson's by ohmybgosh

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: M/M, More Fluff, Prompt Fic, SO MUCH FLUFF, mrs henderson is #1 mom, steves parents do exist

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Claudia Henderson, Dustin Henderson, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-25

Updated: 2017-11-25

Packaged: 2022-04-03 04:59:46

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 4,310

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

For some reason Steve really wants Dustin to get along with Billy. Since it's almost Christmas, Dustin reluctantly gives it a shot.

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Author's Note:

Prompt from tumblr: "Steve and Billy, melancholy off their less than merry homes, somehow end up spending Christmas Eve at Dustin's house."

Check out this amazing [art](#)!

I felt like Dustin would be a Tim Curry fan? Also, my dad used to tell me the Star Wars joke in here all the time and I thought he invented it until I found a book of SW jokes at Urban Outfitters :/
Anyways, here you go! Have some holiday Haringrove cheer!

Christmas Eve, 1985

"Why him?"

Mrs. Henderson looked up from her knitting. The cat, Hamilton, Ham for short, curled up on her lap, perked his ears up, whiskers twitching.

"You think I give a -" Dustin Henderson paused, glancing apologetically at his mother. She frowned at him, mouthing " *Dusty* " warningly.

"A - a *heck* about that?" Dustin waited, listening to the person on the other line. After a moment he groaned, looking reproachful yet resolved.

Mrs. Henderson went back to her knitting.

"Fine, fine, whatever. Bring him along. Just tell him to behave." He listened again. "No, just bring yourselves. Maybe a small gift, if you have time." He paused again, rolled his eyes at the receiver hanging from the wall. "Yeah, yeah. You owe me big time, you know. I'm

talking movie tickets big time. And you're bringing me. *Clue*. Yeah, the *Rocky Horror* guy. And you're buying me candy and a soda. A large soda, not that tiny shit. *Sorry Mom*, I'm sorry. Alright, see ya."

He hung up the phone, sighing loudly.

"Who was that, Sweetie?" Mrs. Henderson asked, counting her stitches. She started a new line, silver needles flashing.

"We have company tonight," was Dustin's weary response.

Steve Harrington stared at himself in the mirror. His hair was freshly fluffed and Farah-ed, which was the word he and Dustin invented to describe exactly how much time, effort, and chemical hairspray went into The Look.

He tugged at his collar. It was itchy; the dark green sweater his mother had laid out for him that morning was woolen, warm but uncomfortable. But it'd have to do. He hadn't listened to her when she warned him to do laundry, instead had let the pile in the corner of his room steadily grow until dirty socks and gym shorts spilled onto the floor.

His parents were away for the evening, driving all the way out to Indianapolis that morning for his father's annual work Christmas Party, which happened to fall on Christmas Eve this year around. They promised Steve they'd be back later that evening, no later than midnight, but he waved them off, rather excited to have the evening to himself.

He'd been planning a date night with his boyfriend for a while now. And he finally had the house to himself. But all that - the dinner he planned to cook and would've likely burned anyway, the candles and the fancy wine his parents hid behind the cereal boxes where they thought he couldn't find them, and the clean silken sheets that he'd been fantasizing about fucking Billy into - all that had vanished in a puff of wistful smoke when he saw Billy's face the night before.

Billy came to his house late that night, throwing rocks at his window,

which wasn't unheard of but always a little alarming. Steve crept down the stairs to let him in, and bit down a yelp when he opened the front door. Billy had an egg-sized lump on his forehead with a handful of still-bleeding cuts. His eyes were watery and he had no coat on, just thin leather boots, some snow soaked jeans, and a black Ralph Lauren t-shirt that was too tight, the one Steve had been looking for earlier.

"What happened?" Steve murmured later, kneeling in front of Billy, who sat on the toilet in the upstairs bathroom. Steve's Dad snored away down the hall but Steve still whispered. His parents knew he and Billy were close, but to the best of their knowledge Steve and Billy were good friends, and Steve wanted to keep it that way because it was nice not having to explain this. He also wasn't sure how they'd react to secret sleepovers, to the sneaking around. They lifted some of their rules since he graduated in June (he was living at home for the time being, working for his father and trying to figure out where to go next), but he didn't think they'd deem this particular situation appropriate.

"Chucked a beer bottle at me," Billy mumbled. He held a bag of frozen peas and carrots to his forehead. He winced when Steve dabbed at his cuts with a rubbing alcohol-swabbed cotton ball, but otherwise didn't complain.

"Asshole," Steve hissed, and he meant it. He tossed the cotton ball into the trash and placed his hands on Billy's knees. "I'm sorry, Baby."

"It's ok," Billy said hoarsely, and then his lip trembled and he looked away from Steve, blinking and shaking his head so that his hair fell in front of his face like a curtain. He sniffed. "I just want a normal fucking Christmas for once."

His voice was husky and the sound made Steve's heart break. In that moment he wished more than anything that he could give Billy the best Christmas in the world, complete with the gift of shoving Neil Hargrove into a rocket ship and shooting him out into space without a helmet because that's what he deserved. Steve had been spending a little too much time with Dustin and his friends; they'd plowed through all the Star Wars movies a few nights ago, pigging out on

popcorn and drinking way too much Coke on the floor in the Byers' living room.

"Let's do it," Steve said, standing and pulling Billy with him. He didn't fawn over Billy, mollycoddle him, tell him how sorry he was and how much he loved him, even though that was what he wanted to do. Billy hated attention when he cried. He preferred to act like it didn't happen, to pretend there was dust or some shit in his eyes, so Steve followed suit. "Let's make this year extra special."

Billy snorted, wiping his eyes. He gave Steve a look, and Steve knew he was being cheesy but he didn't really care.

"Spend Christmas with me," he said, taking Billy's rough and callused hands, pulling them close to his chest.

Billy smiled sadly and shook his head. "Can't miss Christmas Dinner. He'd kill me. It's 'family time.'" He rolled his eyes at the last part.

"What about Christmas Eve?" Steve pushed. "Tomorrow night. You don't have to be home for that, right?"

"No." Billy kissed him then, on the tip of his nose. Steve closed his eyes and smiled, knowing he'd won.

"Whatdya have planned for me, Harrington?"

Steve had panicked a bit at that. A romantic evening alone was all well and good, but it didn't seem quite festive to him. It might as well be any other night. He needed something Christmas-y, with eggnog and gift-giving and making nice with the neighbors. So he called the first person who came to mind. The only person who liked Steve enough to agree to such last minute arrangements. And, Steve thought fondly, the only person, apart from Billy and his parents, that he'd truly enjoy spending Christmas Eve with.

And now Steve was in his room, staring at himself in the mirror, waiting for Billy to arrive. Gifts for the Henderson's lay on top of his bed, badly wrapped but wrapped all the same. Dustin told him not to bring anything, but Steve's parents, who raised him with Country Club hospitality, would have a collective aneurysm if they ever found

out their son attended a dinner party and didn't even bring a goddam bottle of Merlot. So he grabbed the most expensive looking bottle of red from the cabinet, and ran to the store for cat treats and a hodgepodge of things for Dustin that included several new cassettes and a can of hairspray. He'd wrapped it all moments earlier, haphazardly taping paper together and tangling ribbon around the neck of the bottle. It looked like shit, he knew it, but it was the thought that counted, right?

Headlights blared suddenly in his window. He gathered up the gifts and dashed down the stairs. He opened the door when Billy knocked, and groaned loudly.

"I said dress nice," he moaned, ushering Billy inside and shutting the door.

Billy wiped his boots on the mat. He shook snowflakes out of his long hair. "Fuck you, this is nice."

He spun around once, holding his arms out. "Eh? Nice, right?"

Steve pinched the bridge of his nose. It wasn't bad, not by Billy's standards. But it was all wrong for Christmas Eve dinner at the Henderson household. First there were the jeans, and they didn't have holes in them or dirt caked to the cuffs like they normally did, but they were still jeans. There was the usual button-down, barely buttoned up, and the silver chain around his neck (and ok, yes, the cross was good, but the way Billy wore it, low and over his somehow still tan chest, was way too suggestive for what the night called for). His hair looked as it always did, and he, Billy, decided to complete the look with a worn leather jacket.

"I don't think -" Steve began, choosing his words with care.

"Wowee," Billy cut him off, just now noticing Steve's sweater, eyes going wide with glee. He darted forward, swatting Steve's hands out of the way which had risen defensively, and ran his fingers down Steve's fuzzy arms. "By golly, is this real wool?"

"My mom -" Steve mumbled.

"Gee whiz, Steve, you look like a million bucks!" Billy grinned and Steve fought the urge to stick his tongue out.

"Hilarious," he grumbled.

A revengeful thought struck and he smiled slowly. His own thick Christmas sweaters would be a tad too tight on Billy, but his Dad's sweaters would surely fit.

Dustin Henderson, from his spot at the dining room table, rolling out cookie dough on the flour dusted surface, glanced warily at the door when someone knocked on it three times. From the kitchen, crouching down to take a green bean casserole out of the oven, his mother called, "Dustin, can you get that?"

Dustin brushed his floury hands on his jeans. He swatted half-heartedly at Ham, who was slinking along the table to lick the dough. He, Dustin, grumbled to himself and took his time getting to the front door. With a heavy sigh he opened it, then let out a startled laugh, covering his mouth with his hand.

Steve and Billy were there, huddled close together, carrying terribly wrapped presents, and wearing the most incredible sweaters Dustin had ever seen. Steve's was alright, it looked itchy and a little lumpy, but it was a nice shade of green. Billy's though - *wow*.

It was lurid red and green, stripped, and had a fancy little gold monogram "H" on the chest. And it was a turtleneck.

"Holy shit," Dustin laughed, and he sincerely hoped his mom was going to take pictures tonight, because this was a moment Dustin wanted to remember forever, and also give the Party explicit proof, because they definitely would not believe him without photographic evidence.

"*Dusty !*" his mom shouted from the kitchen.

"Sorry mom," Dustin called over his shoulder, still grinning. "I'll put a coin in the jar." He'd put a million coins in the jar for this, if it meant Billy Hargrove would stand on his doorstep in the ugliest

Christmas sweater in the world.

Steve, smiling, breezed past Dustin, ruffling his hair as he went, and set the gifts on the table. He knelt down to take his shoes off.

“Hey, Mrs. Henderson!”

“Hi, sweetheart, how are you?”

Dustin moved aside to let Billy in. Billy, face scrunched up grouchily, followed Steve’s lead and took his shoes off.

“You must be Steve’s friend!” Dustin’s Mom called over her shoulder, flashing her wide, welcome-to-our-home smile. “Any friend of Steve is welcome here!”

Billy, after glancing at Steve, who gave him a nod of encouragement, wandered into the kitchen to introduce himself. He had that charming smile of his on, the one he used to woo someone over.

Dustin grimaced.

Dustin didn’t like Billy, because, well, he didn’t think he needed to explain why to anyone. Lucas and Mike didn’t like Billy, either, but they accepted him because of Max and Eleven, respectively. Will didn’t mind him, but Will was the type of person who could find something nice about anyone. El liked Billy, and sometimes the two of them and Max would go out for breakfast on the weekends (Dustin asked Steve about that one time and Steve simply shrugged, saying “If I knew I’d tell you.”) Max said she was obligated to like Billy, but Dustin knew she really truly liked him, because he bought her ice cream when she asked for it and a new skateboard, and they talked about music together a lot, and sometimes when they watched movies at Will’s house Billy would join them if Steve was there and he and Max would start popcorn fights, and he sometimes came to the arcade early to get her and they’d play *Space Invaders* together and get into incredible shouting matches that usually got them both kicked out. Dustin thought *Space Invaders* was a stupid game to get competitive over, because the graphics were seriously out of date, but Billy and Max were passionate about it, and he had a feeling it was a point of common ground between them.

Dustin didn't really like Billy, but he tolerated him. For whatever reason, Steve always looked like a kicked puppy when Dustin said something bad about Billy. Transitionally, his face would light up whenever Dustin reluctantly agreed to let Billy hang out with them. Dustin didn't know why it was so important to Steve that he like Billy. But Dustin admitted that Steve was the only person that he'd allow to bring Billy Hargrove into his own house. And he could tell it was important to Steve that Billy fucking Hargrove come to Dustin's house on Christmas Eve. So he allowed it. Only for Steve.

And now Billy was chatting up his Mom, leaning against the kitchen counter, testing out the casserole when she offered. And his Mom was eating it all up, smiling brightly at Billy and telling him that yes, she did add rosemary, and how did he guess?

Dustin glowered. He was the Guinea pig for everything his mother made, though recently, when Steve came for dinner solo or dropped Dustin off after school, he'd more often than not leave with a stomach full of Mrs. Henderson's cooking. He always lamented that he was getting fat because of all the good food, and Mrs. Henderson would laugh and say "Good! You're a beanpole!"

He tried to get his Mom's attention by glaring, but she was now asking Billy about California and saying how much she missed the west coast (she took a vacation there in college, she told Billy; Dustin hadn't known). She laughed at something Billy said about rollerskaters.

Traitor, Dustin thought.

"They're getting along," Steve remarked. He was smiling, as if Dustin's Mom and Billy getting along was the greatest thing.

"My Mom likes everyone," Dustin said. Steve frowned, something sad behind his brown eyes.

It was true - Mrs. Henderson did like everyone. She was the type of mother who had homemade snacks for Dustin's friends when they came over, and always made sure they left with some to take home. She brought the neighbors casseroles and baked Mac n Cheese when they were having a hard time. She fed all the neighborhood stray

cats, even though Dustin told her again and again that they weren't strays, they just kept coming back because she fed them (and he swore he saw one of the regulars smirking at him from inside a neighbor's kitchen window once).

Everyone always told Dustin that his Mom was so nice, and Dustin stared at them, confused, because of course his Mom was nice, why wouldn't she be? She'd always been like this, even after Dustin's Dad left.

So he supposed it made sense that she'd be nice to Billy. Dustin had warned her about Billy. But his Mom had just shrugged and said what she always said when he complained about someone, "Dusty, you can't judge a book by its cover."

Steve was still looking sadly at him. Dustin sighed inwardly and resigned himself to at the very least not glare at Billy, and at most (Dustin cringed) try and start a conversation with him. Because Steve was looking at him with those ridiculous sad eyes and it was really starting to make Dustin uncomfortable.

He beckoned Steve over to the table. "Help me make the cookies."

Steve bounded eagerly to the table, then stopped dead, seeing the shapes Dustin had carved out of the dough.

"Are those -"

"Yep!"

"Um. Why?"

"It's a coping mechanism."

"A what?"

"It means something you do to deal with being sad."

Steve looked him over anxiously.

"You're sad?" His face was concerned.

“Not really,” Dustin hurriedly assured him. Steve had a knack for jumping the gun whenever Dustin got hurt, upset, or anything other than happy, really. “It’s just a homage to D’Art, you know?”

“A what? Sorry.”

“A homage, kind of like a tribute.”

“Oh.” Steve examined the cookies, carefully, curiously. Dustin thought they were pretty cool. He’d made several baby D’Art shaped ones, and then the older D’Art ones, which were mostly just flower shaped, but Dustin thought, if you used your imagination, that they looked rather good.

He glanced uncertainly at Steve, suddenly self-conscious. “Is it weird?”

“No!” Steve said quickly. Dustin looked skeptical, and Steve nudged his shoulder affectionately. “It’s not, I mean it. They’re really accurate, too. Are you going to frost them?”

“Maybe,” Dustin shrugged.

Billy appeared at Steve’s side, a mug of hot cocoa in one hand. Little white marshmallows floated merrily at the top, steam swirling up into the cozy air. Dustin narrowed his eyes. So his Mom was breaking out the minis now, huh?

“Hey, those look like -” Billy began, pointing at the uncooked cookies on the table.

“They are,” Dustin snapped.

“Cool.” Billy nodded appreciatively and sipped his cocoa.

There was an awkward pause, in which Dustin glared at the cookies, Steve looked back and forth between the two of them helplessly, and Billy rested his chin on Steve’s shoulder, either unaware of the animosity or pretending not to notice. Dustin remembered his promise to himself earlier and tried to think of something civil to say.

“What, ah, what are they for?” Steve coughed, trying to break up the

tension.

“For Santa.”

Steve laughed, surprised. “For *Santa* ?”

“Yes.” Dustin bristled. “Obviously we’re just going to eat them all tomorrow. But we still put them out with milk. It’s tradition.”

“I’m sorry, I just -”

“It’s *tradition* , Steve,” Billy said. He smiled at Dustin, a strange smile that looked suspicious on his face.

Dustin eyed him warily.

They finished rolling out the cookies then, and Steve helped Dustin make several more D’Art inspired shapes. Billy helped too, rolling up the sleeves of his ridiculous sweater, and made a cookie that looked sort of like a -

“Is that a dick?” Steve whispered.

“What? No, it’s a snowman.” Billy gestured at it, as if to help them see. “Look, he has a little hat.”

“That’s not what I thought it was,” Steve snorted.

Dustin tilted his head, examining the cookie. A smile slipped unbidden across his face. It was a very suggestive cookie.

“No, look, it’s - it’s - *shit* .” Billy looked forlornly at the cookie.

“Hey, go put a coin in the jar,” Steve scolded.

Billy looked at him, confused, and Dustin jumped in.

“Our swear jar,” he said shortly. He pointed to it, in its home on the fireplace mantel. It was nearly full; almost all of the coins in there were his, with a smattering from Steve, a handful or two from Mike, and three memorable quarters from his Mom, who almost never swore.

“Shit, sorry.” He rummaged in his pockets.

“That’s two coins,” Steve warned.

“Alright, alright.” Billy found his change, three quarters, two pennies, and a dime, and crossed the room, dumping all 87 cents into the jar.

Dustin raised his eyebrows. He only ever tossed his pennies in the jar; the quarters were essential for the arcade and the nickels and dimes were good if you were in a pinch and really needed a candy bar.

They transferred the cookies onto a baking sheet soon after, and Billy hurriedly set down his cocoa to help Dustin’s Mom take the rolls out of the oven, making a space for the cookies.

Dustin watched Billy curiously when they sat at the table to eat. He talked with Dustin’s Mom easily, charismatically, complimenting her cooking. When he wasn’t asking Mrs. Henderson polite questions, or else offering up his help when she mentioned something amiss in the house (like the leak in the refrigerator, or the one temperamental burner on the stovetop that always seemed to catch on fire if you turned it to anything above “low”), he ate steadily, a lot of food, stealing a roll from Steve’s plate when Steve wasn’t looking. Dustin stared, wondering where it all went, before he remembered Max saying how Billy liked to workout pretty much everyday. When he wasn’t eating or talking, he was smiling at Steve, seemingly subconsciously, his light eyes drifting over to Steve’s face. And Steve smiled back at him the same way, with that goofy grin.

Dustin knew they were in love. Steve talked about Billy all the time, and when he wasn’t talking about Billy he’d get this soppy day-dreamy look on his face, which meant he was thinking about Billy. Dustin had thought it was gross, when Billy joined them for movie nights and wheedled his way into Steve’s seat, nuzzling his neck, making Steve blush from the tip of his nose to the tops of his ears. And it was still kind of gross, the way they looked at each other. But, sitting across the table from them, it was kind of, no, not cute. But. Something along those lines.

After dinner Steve leapt up to help Dustin’s Mom with the dishes, murmuring something in Billy’s ear as he went. Dustin grimaced,

because he knew what Steve was doing, and he reminded himself that it was Christmas, and if Steve wanted him to make small talk with Billy this badly, then he might as well give it a shot.

Ham, who'd been hiding underfoot while they ate, jumped up onto the table, licking leftover crumbs. Billy reached out to scratch Ham's ears.

"How's school?" Billy asked after a long moment.

"Ok." Dustin shrugged.

"Nothing strange happening in Hawkins?"

"Not really. You've been here, haven't you." He learned from Max that Billy still lived at home, but spent as much time as he could at work or with Steve. She told him Billy was saving money, trying to get out as soon as he could afford to.

"Guess so."

There was another awkward pause. Dustin heard his Mom talking quietly in the kitchen over the sound of running water, asking Steve how he liked working for his Dad.

Billy tried again. "Seen any good movies recently?"

"Nothing new."

"Hey, thanks for forcing Steve to watch *Star Wars* , by the way." Billy was smiling.

"He's obsessed now," Dustin said. He glanced at Steve fondly, who was telling Dustin's Mom about his plans to apply for college, drying the dishes and putting them away while she washed. "I can't believe he thought he wouldn't like them."

"I know! He never got my jokes before."

Dustin glanced at Billy, his mouth tugging at the corner despite his best efforts. "Lemme hear one."

“What did Obi Wan say to Luke when he couldn’t eat his Chinese food?”

“What?”

“Use the forks, Luke.”

Dustin snorted. “That’s stupid.”

“It is. Steve loves it, though. He almost pissed his pants when I told him the first time.” Billy glanced anxiously over his shoulder at the last bit. “Does that count as a swear?”

“Nah, ‘piss’ is fine.”

“Good, I don’t have any more change on me.”

“I like your sweater.” Dustin smirked; he couldn’t help himself.

“Thanks,” Billy sighed, tugging at the high collar. “It’s Mr. Harrington’s.”

“I can tell.” Dustin guessed that Steve had made Billy wear it, and that said something about how much Billy must love Steve. Dustin thought that was one thing they had in common, at least.

“How’s it going?” Steve returned, looking hopefully at Dustin.

“Good,” Dustin said, surprising himself to find he actually meant it.

Steve’s face lit up, and he stood behind Billy, resting one hand against his cheek. Billy leaned in, tilting his chin up to smile at Steve. Dustin looked away, not because he thought it was gross, rather to give them some privacy.

The two of them left a little while after, Billy carrying a large tupperware of D’Art shaped sugar cookies (“Make sure Max gets some of those, she’s such a sweetheart,” said Dustin’s Mom) and Steve thanking them for the thirtieth time for having them for the evening and promising Dustin they’d go to the movies the day after Christmas.

“I don’t know what you were going on about earlier, Dustin,” his Mom said later that evening, putting some last minute gifts under the tree while Dustin set the cookies out on the counter, idly shooing Ham away, who kept creeping closer to the glass of milk. “Billy was so kind, did you know he gave me his number, told me to call anytime we need something fixed at the house? He and Steve seem like good friends.”

“They are,” Dustin said, picking up a baby D’Art cookie and taking a bite, chewing thoughtfully.

Billy really seemed to make Steve happy. And seeing Dustin and Billy get along made Steve happy, too. Billy wasn’t that bad, not now. Dustin thought he could get along with him, maybe even be his friend, in the distant future.

Only for Steve.